



# IOWA RECOVERY TIMES

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**Safer, Stronger,  
Smarter**

[www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov)

## INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SAFE ROOMS IN IOWA

Made to withstand winds up to 250 miles per hour and keep hundreds of people safe during a tornado, the number of high-wind event safe rooms in Iowa is on the rise.

The increased interest and number of applications are the result of more funding and a push by Iowa's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) since the 2008 disasters, to promote safe rooms, particularly in school settings.

To date, eight safe rooms have been built in Iowa, with the first one constructed at the Iowa



*Waverly-Shell Rock students break ground for the school and safe room construction project.*

State Fair Grounds in Des Moines in 2003. Now, three more safe rooms, all of which will be incorporated into schools, have been

approved for funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The three school sites are

*(Continued on page 3)*

## CEDAR RAPIDS NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

On Wednesday, Dec. 16, city and state officials with neighborhood leaders broke ground for a new affordable housing project called the Oakhill Jackson Brickstones.

The project is a two building, \$19 million dollar endeavor which will provide 96 units of much

needed quality, affordable housing in the Oakhill Jackson Neighborhood, adjacent to Cedar Rapids' downtown.

Jack Hatch, President of the Hatch Development Group said "prior to the flood this neighborhood was in decline, but city leaders had a vision for revitalization. The

flood has provided us with an amazing opportunity to do our part in providing affordable housing that we all know is so greatly needed."

Funding for the project has been provided by a unique collaboration between the

*(Continued on page 2)*

**BUYOUTS (continued from page 1)**

*City and state officials with neighborhood and business leaders break ground for the new Oakhill Jackson Brickstones project.*

National Equity Fund, the Iowa Finance Authority, City of Cedar Rapids and Hatch Development.

Lt. Gen. Ron Dardis, Executive Director of the Rebuild Iowa Office,

commented, "This collaboration speaks to the dedication of all the partners involved, from state and city officials to the local neighborhood leaders. Projects like this help move

Cedar Rapids and Iowa further along the road to recovery."

Pictured (from left): **Mike Richards**, Oakhill Jackson Neighborhood Association President; **Brian Fagan**, Cedar Rapids Mayor Pro Tem; **Ryan Barton**, Vice President Commercial Banking, Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust; **Lt. General Ron Dardis**, Executive Director of the Rebuild Iowa Office; **Jack Hatch**, Hatch Development Group President; **Dale Todd**, Hatch Development Project Manager; **Carla Pope**, Director of Affordable Rental Production for the Iowa Finance Authority; **Lu Barron**, Chair, Linn County Board of Supervisors; **Gene Neighbor**, Vice-President, Farmers State Bank; Member of the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors

## NEW OUTREACH EFFORT TO IMPACTED IOWANS

The Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) wants to make sure every individual, family and small business owner impacted by the 2008 disasters is aware of the various disaster assistance programs that currently exist. One of the RIO's goals is to ensure impacted Iowans have all the necessary information they need in order to assist with recovery.

In order to make sure all Iowans are aware of the resources and funding that is currently available, the RIO recently worked with the Iowa Newspaper Association to develop a message that will be placed in newspapers across the state the weeks of Dec. 20, Dec. 27 and Jan. 3.

The message will be placed in 195 newspapers that are in both communities that suffered damage in the 2008 disasters and those that did

not. Since the recovery truly is a statewide effort, the RIO wants all Iowans to be aware of the phone number and Web site to contact for assistance.

In a survey conducted by the RIO earlier this year, a large percentage of the responses indicated that disaster victims relied on their local newspapers for information about disaster recovery.

**HELP** is still available for  
individuals and businesses  
recovering from the 2008  
**DISASTERS.**

**Do you know someone  
who needs assistance?**

**Call 1-866-849-0323 or visit the Rebuild Iowa  
Office (RIO) Web site at [www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov)**

*The message above will run in Iowa newspapers statewide to ensure all Iowans are aware of the resources available to people affected by the 2008 disasters.*

**SAFE ROOMS (continued from page 1)**

among Iowa's 67 safe room proposals that are in some stage of application with HSEMD.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds are designed to minimize the impact of future emergency events by taking steps to protect lives and property. Purchasing frequently flooded property, constructing safe rooms, and other measures such as flood walls, are typical mitigation examples. HSEMD administers the mitigation program which receives funding based on federal dollars used for disaster recovery.

Due to the magnitude of the 2008 disasters, Iowa's mitigation program will receive more than \$316 million this year, said John Wageman, State Hazard Mitigation Officer with HSEMD. However, all mitigation projects that are approved under the funding must be cost effective and serve as a benefit to the local community. The funds are then issued as reimbursement grants to communities, schools or government entities, not individuals or businesses.

HSEMD specialists like Linda Roose, Lead Project Officer for safe rooms and planning, have helped increase the number of planned safe rooms in the state.

On Dec. 2, Roose and Wageman, along with several other HSEMD, FEMA and Rebuild Iowa Office officials, attended a ground-breaking ceremony in Waverly for a new Waverly-Shell Rock Community School District middle school which will include a safe room. The school is being built to replace two school buildings damaged by flood waters in 2008. The entire project was a result of a joint effort between HSEMD Mitigation and Public Assistance staff.

"One of the neatest things about the safe rooms is that they can be incorporated into buildings as a useful room," Roose said. "It is not just a concrete room sitting off somewhere by itself."

Within the new Waverly school, the safe room will be the auditorium. While the auditorium will seat 850 people and host

special events, the room will also have the capacity to hold more than 1,350 staff, students and area residents during a high-wind event, such as a tornado. The school district will receive \$1.4 million toward the project specifically for the safe room construction.

The eight safe rooms which already exist in Iowa also serve other capacities. For example, the safe room in Britt is a campground shower house. In Clear Lake, the local Veterans of Foreign Wars building is the community safe room. At the Iowa State Fair Grounds, the safe room acts as a large multi-purpose building when it's not in use as a tornado safe room.

Safe rooms are built to specific standards set by FEMA guidance which requires the rooms provide shelter for larger groups of people in extreme-wind events. The criteria specifies the materials, design and construction of a shelter that makes it able to withstand winds up to 250 miles per hour. The State Fire Marshal Division of the Iowa Department of Public Safety is also coordinating with the Rebuild Iowa Office and other agencies on best practices recommendations for safe room standards in Iowa.

Statistically:

- There are currently eight safe rooms in use in Iowa. The safe rooms are located in Britt, Clear Lake, Des Moines, Duncombe, Mason City, Nashua, Ventura and Vinton.
- There are a total of 67 proposed Iowa safe room projects in some stage of the application process with FEMA.
- Twenty-five of those applications request safe rooms be included in a school building.
- To date, three school-based safe room applications in Iowa have been approved by FEMA. They will be constructed in the Waverly-Shell Rock, Nevada and Mount Ayr community school districts.

*"[A safe room]...  
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itself."*

*-Linda Roose, HSEMD*



## The Rebuild Iowa Office



*The Rebuild Iowa Office is tasked with ensuring that the state rebuilds safer, stronger and smarter than before the 2008 disasters. The RIO is supported by a professional staff made up of existing state employees and hired full-time staff to allow it to achieve its mission, vision, goals and objectives. Throughout its initiatives, the RIO is committed to a recovery and rebuilding process that is fair and equitable to everyone.*

[www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov)

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## 2010 REBUILD IOWA DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The Rebuild Iowa Office will once again host “Rebuild Iowa Day at the Capitol” in support of the state’s continued recovery from the devastating tornadoes, floods and storms of 2008.

The event will take place Thursday, Jan. 14 from 9 a.m. to noon at the State Capitol Rotunda.

Local, state and federal partners will be on hand to share individual, business and community recovery stories and to help raise awareness about Iowa’s disaster recovery effort.

People will be available to answer questions about state and federal funding

resources, the Water Resource Coordinating Council’s recommendations on watershed management, flood insurance, flood plain mapping, the Rebuild Iowa Office, community long-term recovery efforts and housing and small business issues.

Legislators and the public are encouraged to attend the event to learn more about the challenges and successes of Iowa’s disaster recovery effort.

For more information about “Rebuild Iowa Day at the Capitol,” contact the Rebuild Iowa Office at (515) 242-5004 or visit the Rebuild Iowa Office Web site at [www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov).



*Gov. Culver signs HF64 (“The Rebuild Iowa Bill”) at the 2009 Rebuild Iowa Day at the Capitol.*

## Clip &amp; Save...

## Federal Agencies

General FEMA Information	800.621.FEMA (3362)
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.462.7585
FEMA Fraud Detection	800.323.8603
National Flood Insurance Program	800.427.4661
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.427.5593
Social Security Administration	800.772.1213
U.S. Small Business Administration	800.659.2955
Internal Revenue Service	800.829.1040
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.829.4059
Tax-Related Disaster Relief	866.562.5227
Housing & Urban Development Hotline	800.669.9777
Department of Veterans Affairs	800.827.0648

## Iowa Contacts

For up-to-date disaster and recovery information visit the Rebuild Iowa Office Web site at [www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov).

If you have questions about consumer fraud, contact Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division  
888.777.4590 or 515.281.5926

To volunteer or make donations, contact:  
Iowa Concern Hotline 800.447.1985

Disaster Unemployment Information 800.JOB.IOWA

Iowa Mortgage Help 877.622.4866 or  
[www.IowaMortgageHelp.com](http://www.IowaMortgageHelp.com)

Ticket to Hope crisis counseling  
(call the Iowa Concern Hotline) 800.447.1985

Iowa Other Needs Assistance 800.659.2955

Other Needs Assistance 866.434.4692